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Address
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It had been eleven days since I had last spoken publicly about the AIDS epidemic.

I acknowledged that I was speaking to a very important group – the people that make government work, year in and year out and to the people who keep it honest and who keep it fair. And that's why our government is both honest and fair.

Such honesty and fair play don't make the headlines; just the opposite behavior does. Nevertheless, as responsible administrators I said that we should be on our guard, because some very strong forces were lined up against us. I talked about greed, prejudice and intolerance, inattention, boredom, ignorance, and indolence.

Fortunately, the human race has another much grander instinct and that is to recover and survive, the instinct for renewal, the instinct for self-preservation, and the need to feel good about one's self. That is an optimistic instinct, and I said I thought government was at its best when it supported and nourished that most hopeful of humanity's many attributes – our basic instinct to want to live a decent life.

This observation isn't limited to government. A good administrator anywhere will respect this basic instinct and that's what we mean by "occupational health" or "employee health". Of course, we're interested in the employee's health needs in general where bringing the concept of disease prevention and health promotion into the workplace and onto the worksite. I then extolled the virtues of administrators who had lined up to provide the things that we in public health thought were necessary for this endeavor.

I went into some detail about the good outcomes that come from this kind of approach and then launched into the purpose of my being there, "AIDS in the Workplace". I brought statistics up to date, talked about the epidemiology and prevalence of the disease, its mortality, its lack of treatment, and the absence of a magic bullet. Nothing new was said from this point on, that doesn't appear in my remarks to the Public Health Service on the 20th of October 1988 or in my remarks to the National Management Conference of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, on Working with Persons with AIDS on November 10th, 1988. For that reason, I will not speak further about the content of this particular lecture.